

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY MEXICO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS:SENV, MX

SUBJECT: U.S./MEXICAN ENVIRONMENT MEETING - TIJUANA,
DECEMBER 11-12

SUMMARY:

1. MEETING TOOK PLACE ON TWO LEVELS: (A) THE OFFICIAL DELEGATION-HEAD LEVEL, WHICH CONSIDERED PROPOSALS MADE BY BOTH SIDES FOR ACTION PROGRAMS (RELATED TO BORDER ENVIRONMENT PROBLEMS) SUCH AS DATA COLLECTION AND EXCHANGE FOR AIR AND WATER POLLUTION, SOLID WASTE, HEALTH EFFECTS OF AIR POLLUTION, AND OIL SPILL CONTINGENCY PLAN; AND (B) THE WORKING LEVEL. MOST OF THESE PROJECTS BECAME OPERATIVE ON THE SPOT AS TECHNICAL EXPERTS OF BOTH DELS INFORMALLY LEFT THE MAIN MEETING ROOM TO DISCUSS DETAILS. DELEGATION HEAD VIZCAINO ENDED MEETING WITH PROMISE TO CLEAR ABOVE

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"PROPOSALS" WITH MEXICO CITY AND TO HAVE A SMALLER MEETING
IN 60 DAYS TO IMPLEMENT PROPOSALS. END SUMMARY.

2. AFTER NEARLY FIVE YEARS OF FAIRLY FRUITLESS FORAYS
BY EPA REPS INTO MEXICO, PLUS ONE BRIEF ENCOUNTER AT
EL PASO IN SEPTEMBER 1973, WE HAVE EMERGED FROM TIJUANA
WITH SOLID PROSPECTS FOR AN ACTION PROGRAM TO COMBAT U.S./

MEXICAN BORDER POLLUTION. EXCHANGE OF TECHNICAL DATA ON
WATER POLLUTION AND SOLID WASTE BEGAN DURING MEETING.

3. THE PROGRAM CAN NOT AT THIS POINT PROPERLY BE DESCRIBED
AS A U.S./MEXICAN "AGREEMENT." FOR ALTHOUGH VIZCAINO
AND ECHEVERRIA BLINKED PERMISSIVELY AS THE U.S. AND
MEXICAN EXPERTS PAIRED OFF TO CONCOCT OPERATING SCHEDULES,
THEY WANT AN OKAY FROM A KIND OF UNDER SECRETARIES
COMMITTEE (NAVY, PRESIDENCIA (PLANNING DIVISION OF
PRESIDENT'S OFFICE), HYDROLOGIC RESOURCES, STATE
DEPARTMENT FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, PUBLIC HEALTH AND PEMEX.)
BEFORE THEY WILL OFFICIALLY AGREE TO ANY ACTION PLAN.

4. MEXICANS EXPLAINED THAT PARTICULARLY IN AN ELECTION
YEAR THEY MUST BE ABLE TO SHOW THEIR ADMINISTRATION THERE
IS NO NEGATIVE POLITICAL TINGE TO PROJECTS PROPOSED IN
TIJUANA, SUCH AS A THREAT TO MEXICAN SOVEREIGNTY BY U.S.
ENVIRONMENTALISTS, OR FORCING OF U.S. IDEAS ON MEXICAN
AUTHORITIES. ACTUALLY THIS SHOULD PRESENT NO PROBLEM
SINCE THE TIJUANA AGENDA FROM WHICH PROJECTS ARE DRAWN
WAS DRAFTED BY THE MEXICANS.

5. DETAILS OF ACTIONS TAKEN AT TIJUANA: MEXICANS SUGGEST
A SMALLER GROUP - 3 OR 4 - ON EACH SIDE MEET AGAIN IN
MEXICO 60 DAYS FROM NOW LESS OFFICIALLY AND LAUNCH
PROGRAM WHICH IS NOW IN OPERATION AT TECHNICAL LEVEL.
INTERIM DISCUSSION BETWEEN MEXICANS AND EPA ANTICIPATED
IN WASHINGTON IN JANUARY AFTER VIZCAINO MURRAY AND
DR. SANCHEZ APPEAR AT UN PREP SESSION ON HABITAT.

COMMENT:

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6. IT IS CLEAR THAT ALTHOUGH COOPERATIVE WORK AT LAST
UNDERWAY IN EARNEST, U.S. MUST NOT IN ANY WAY PUBLICIZE
TIJUANA RESULTS LEST WE JEOPARDIZE THESE HARD-WON
PRELIMINARY STEPS TOWARD ULTIMATE BORDER-WIDE POLLUTION
CONTROL PROGRAM. KISSINGER

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